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ABSTRACT

In 1989, a follow-up study was conducted of the 1988 graduates of William Rainey Harper College's (WRHC's) Dental Hygiene program in order to measure the quality of the program, explore the need for changes, and substantiate the program's goals for accreditation standards. A survey was mailed to all 27 associate degree graduates, requesting information on their current employment and/or enrollment in school, experiences in finding employment, salary and benefits, tasks performed on the job and quality of their preparation for performing them, level of satisfaction with their chosen profession and their WRHC training, and suggestions for improving the quality of the program. Study findings, based on a 74% response rate, included the following: (1) 18 of the 20 respondents were employed in the dental hygiene field, with 13 working full time; (2) 58% were working in a job setting with only one practitioner, while 42% worked with more than one practitioner; (3) the respondents' search for employment typically involved three interviews, with 30% of the respondents using the local newspaper and 25% using WRHC's placement services to find their jobs; (4) only 5% of the graduates found employment through personal contacts, compared with 56% of the 1987 graduates; (5) 90% of the graduates were paid on an hourly basis, with a median wage of approximately $15 per hour; (6) among those employed in the dental hygiene field, 70% were very satisfied with their chosen profession; (7) graduates reported that they were very well prepared in the skill areas they performed most often; and (8) only three graduates were currently working toward an advanced degree, but 75% of the respondents intended to do so eventually. The survey instrument is attached. (ALB)

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Office of Planning and Research

William Rainey Harper College

FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF 1988 DENTAL HYGIENE GRADUATES

Volume XVII, No. 7
May 30, 1989

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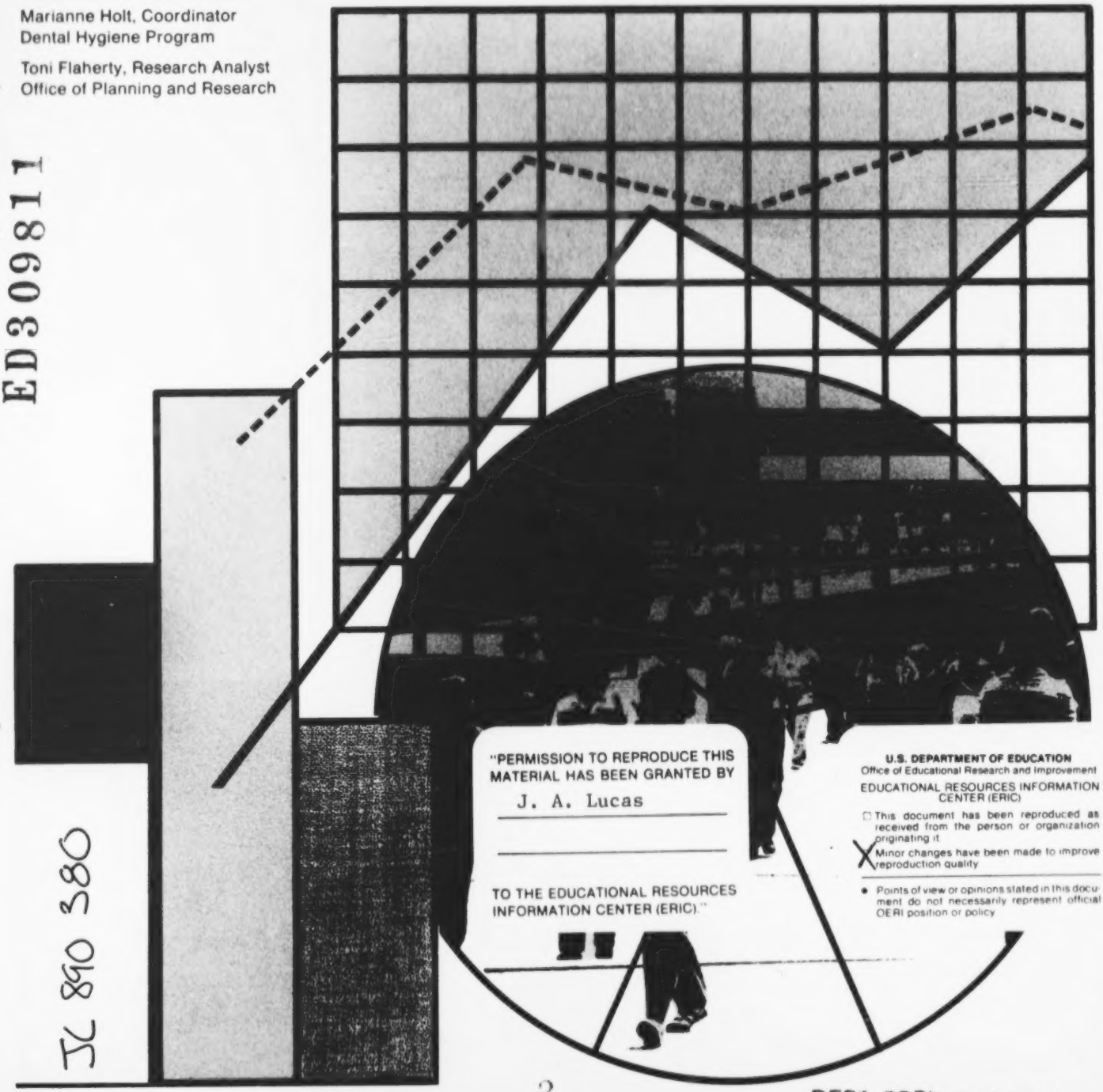

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A B S T R A C T

THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY WAS TO FOLLOW UP THE TWENTY-SEVEN 1988 DENTAL HYGIENE GRADUATES AS ONE INDICATOR OF THE QUALITY OF THE PROGRAM, THE NEED FOR APPROPRIATE CHANGES AND IN ORDER TO SUBSTANTIATE THE PROGRAM'S GOALS FOR ACCREDITATION STANDARDS. A SURVEY INSTRUMENT WAS MAILED TO THESE GRADUATES AND AFTER SEVERAL FOLLOW-UP EFFORTS, A 74 PERCENT RESPONSE RATE WAS OBTAINED.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY INDICATED THAT ALMOST ALL DENTAL HYGIENE GRADUATES ARE EMPLOYED IN A DENTAL HYGIENE POSITION THEY PREFER. THEY ARE GENERALLY VERY SATISFIED OR AT LEAST SATISFIED WITH THEIR CAREER CHOICE. IN ADDITION, THEIR SALARIES AND BENEFITS CONTINUE TO BE VERY GOOD COMPARED TO OTHER HARPER CAREER GRADUATES. THEY ALSO REPORT LITTLE DIFFICULTY IN FINDING A JOB. GRADUATES ONCE AGAIN REPORT THEY ARE VERY WELL PREPARED IN THE SKILL AREAS THEY PERFORM MOST OFTEN. CURRENTLY, THREE GRADUATES ARE WORKING TOWARD ADVANCED DEGREES WHILE THREE QUARTERS PLAN TO EVENTUALLY WORK TOWARD ONE. FINALLY, ALL DENTAL HYGIENE GRADUATES ARE SATISFIED WITH THEIR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION.

OPERATIONAL STAFF:

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Purpose

The purpose of this study was to follow up the 1988 Dental Hygiene graduates as one indicator of the quality of the program, the need for appropriate changes and in order to substantiate the program's goals for accreditation standards. The study was requested by the Coordinator of the Dental Hygiene Program.

Population Surveyed and Methodology

The survey instrument shown in the appendix was designed by the Coordinator of the Dental Hygiene Program with input from the Office of Planning and Research. This survey was mailed to all 27 1988 Dental Hygiene associate degree graduates. After four weeks those not responding were mailed a second copy of the survey. One month later, those still not responding were telephoned and encouraged to complete the survey. With this follow-up effort, 20 completed surveys were obtained for a 74 percent response rate.

Discussion of the Results

Among the 20 respondents, 18 are employed in the dental hygiene field. Thirteen are employed full time in one situation while 4 more are employed full time with 2 part-time jobs. Another 2 are employed part-time by choice (1 not in dental hygiene field). One is employed in the dental field but not as a hygienist.

In examining their employment situations, 58 percent are in a setting with only one practitioner while 42 percent are with more than one practitioner. Most (92%) are employed in general practice. The most common situation in their search for employment was to go through three job interviews. There were various avenues used in searching for employment but the most frequent means (30%) was through the local newspaper. Another 25 percent got their job through Harper and 20 percent used ADHA placement. Harper and ADHA placement were more frequently used by these graduates than in the previous survey. Interestingly, only 5 percent of the 1988 graduates found employment through personal contacts as compared with 56 percent of the 1987 graduates.

Almost 90 percent are paid on an hourly salary basis, while others receive commissions or bonuses or salary on another type of basis. The median hourly salary is about $15 per hour and the median daily salary is about $120. This latter figure is equivalent to an annual salary of just over $31,000 - equal to starting salaries for 1987 dental hygiene graduates. This is higher than the average nursing graduate ($22,000) or the average career graduate ($20,000). These dental hygienists also receive a number of benefits of which the most popular are reduced fees for dental work, paid vacation (1-2 weeks), Christmas bonus, paid holidays (median of 6.5 days) and continuing education paid for by the employer.

Among those employed in dental hygiene, 70 percent are very satisfied with their chosen profession while 95 percent are at least satisfied with their chosen profession. One person said their profession was OK and no graduates expressed any dissatisfaction.

These graduates were also asked how frequently they perform certain dental hygiene skills and how well they were prepared to perform these skills. The 13 skills that were performed often by the 1988 graduates are comparable to those listed by the 1987 graduates. Another 9 were almost never performed. The other 15 skills were

Discussion of the Results (continued)

performed occasionally. On 26 of these skills, the dental hygiene graduates felt they were very adequately prepared while on another 9 skills they were a little more than adequately prepared. On the remaining two skills, they felt less than adequately prepared. This 1988 group of dental hygiene graduates expressed better preparation for various skills than the 1987 group. As in previous studies, the skill areas in which graduates reported they were the least prepared were also the skill areas they seldom performed.

As for continuing their education, 3 1988 graduates are working toward advanced degrees (general studies, business, teaching/management). However, three-quarters of the 1988 graduates anticipate to eventually work toward an advanced degree. Almost all (95%) of the graduates have maintained membership in the IDHA/ADHA and 37 percent participated in formalized continuing education presentations. When asked how satisfied they were with their professional education, 19 said they were satisfied or very satisfied. One expressed they were somewhat satisfied. Many commented that the dental hygiene program was excellent and prepared them well for their job. One felt much of the information was outdated and another said the stress level was often unbearable.

Major Conclusions

Almost all dental hygiene graduates are employed in a dental hygiene position they prefer. They are generally very satisfied or at least satisfied with their career choice. In addition, their salaries and benefits continue to be very good compared to other Harper career graduates. They also report little difficulty in finding a job. Graduates once again report they are very well prepared in the skill areas they perform most often. Currently, 3 graduates are working toward advanced degrees, while three quarters plan to eventually work toward one. Finally, all dental hygiene graduates are satisfied with their professional education.

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

Situation	1988 N	1988 PCT
Employed full time as dental hygienist	13	65.0
Employed in two part-time jobs as a dental hygienist equaling full-time employment in hours worked	4	20.0
Employed as a part-time dental hygienist by choice	1.5	7.5
Employed outside the dental hygiene field by choice	.5	2.5
Employed in dental field but not as a hygienist	1.0	5.0
Total	20	100.0

EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

Practice Setting

Solo practitioner	11	57.9
More than one practitioner	8	42.1
Clinic Type	0	0
Total	19	100.0

Type of Practice

General Practice	17.5	92.1
Perio	1.0	5.3
Pedo	.5	2.6
Total	19	100.0

Number of Jobs Interviewed for in Employment Search

One	4	21.1
Two	4	21.1
Three	3	15.7
Four	2	10.5
Five	2	10.5
Six	2	10.5
Seven	1	5.3
Eight	1	5.3
Total	19	100.0

Median Number of Interviews - 3

How Salary is Determined	N	1988 PCT of 19 Respondents
Hourly salary	17	89.5
Commission	3	15.7
Salary and commission	3	15.7
Bonus and one of the aforementioned	7	36.8
Independent contracting	1	5.3
Annually	1	5.3

Average Daily Salary

Amount	N	PCT
$104	5	33.3
$112	1	6.7
$114	1	6.7
$120	3	20.0
$127.50	1	6.7
$128.80	1	6.7
$130	1	6.7
$135	1	6.7
$144	1	6.7
Total	15	100.0

Median Daily Salary - $120
Equivalent to an annual salary of $31,200

Hourly Salary

Amount	N	PCT
$12.00	1	5.3
$13.00	6	31.5
$13.00*	1	5.3
$14.00	1	5.3
$15.00	6	31.5
$16.10	1	5.3
$16.25	1	5.3
$17.00	1	5.3
$18.00	1	5.3
Total	19	100.0

*Plus bonus
Median hourly salary - $15

Work Week - Hours Per Week	N	PCT
20	1	5.0
25	1	5.0
30-35	1	5.0
32	2	10.0
32-40	1	5.0
34	1	5.0
34-37	1	5.0
35	2	10.0
35-40	1	5.0
40	3	15.0
40 plus	2	10.0
40-45	1	5.0
42-54	1	5.0
45-50	1	5.0
48	1	5.0
Total	20	100.0

Median Hours Per Week - 37.5

	1988	
	N	PCT
Number of Offices		
One	7	50.0
Two	6	42.9
Three	1	7.1
Total	14	100.0

Avenues Used to Find Employment Situation	N	PCT of 20
Personal contact	1	5.0
Local newspaper	6	30.0
Harper	5	25.0
ADHA Placement	4	20.0
Major city newspaper	3	15.0
Private placement agency	1	5.0
Friend	1	5.0
Past employer	1	5.0

Difficulty in finding employment: 1 - information regarding salaries was exaggerated

Goal During Employment Search	N	PCT
Full-time work in one office (more than 30 hours/week)	15	79.0
Part-time work in more than one office to equal full time	2	10.5
Part-time employment (less than 30 hours/week)	2	10.5
Total	19	100.0

Satisfaction with Chosen Profession		
Very Satisfied	14	70.0
Satisfied	5	25.0
It is OK	1	5.0
Dissatisfied	0	0
Total	20	100.0

Benefits Included in Work Situation	N	1988 PCT of 19
Reduced fee for dental work	18	94.7
Paid vacation - average one week	17	89.5
Christmas bonus	17	89.5
Paid holidays - median 6.5 days	15	78.9
Continuing education courses paid	11	57.9
Major medical	10	52.6
Uniform allowance	10	52.6
Bonus for production increase	8	42.1
Paid sick days - varies between 3 and 12 days	6	31.6
Malpractice insurance	6	31.6
Profit sharing	5	26.3
Pension plan	3	15.8
Life insurance	2	10.5
Disability insurance	2	10.5
Paid dues for association	2	10.5
Liability insurance	1	5.3

Advanced Education/Professional Development

Working Toward An Advanced Degree	N	PCT
Yes - General Studies -- Northern Illinois University	3	15.0
Business -- Barat College		
Teaching/Management -- No response		
No	17	85.0

Anticipate to Eventually Work Toward Advanced Degree				
Yes			12	75.0
No			4	25.0
Major Area of Study - Health -- 2	Management -- 1			
Biology -- 2	Psychology -- 1			
B.S.Degree -- 2	DDS -- 1			

Professional Development	N	PCT of 19
Maintained membership in IDHA/ADHA	18	94.7
Attend local IDHA component meetings	7	36.8
Participated in formalized continuing education presentations	7	36.8
Volunteered for community projects or activities	4	21.1

Satisfaction with Professional Education	N	PCT
Very Satisfied	15	75.0
Satisfied	4	20.0
Somewhat Satisfied	1	5.0
Dissatisfied	0	0
Total	20	100.0

Comments:
- Felt very well prepared for job - 9.5
- Excellent program - 4.5
- Much information was outdated - 1
- Often stress level was unbearable - 1

FREQUENCY OF PERFORMING VARIOUS DENTAL HYGIENE DUTIES

Duty	N	Frequency Index 2 = Often 1 = Occasionally 0 = Never
Hand Scaling	20	2.00
Radiographs - Interproximal Survey	20	2.00
Radiographs - Perapicals	20	1.95
Radiographs - Complete Intra Oral Survey	20	1.90
Medical History of Patient	20	1.90
Patient Education - Individual	20	1.85
Periodontal Scaling	20	1.80
Polishing - All Patients	19	1.74
Intra/Extra Oral Exam	20	1.70
Periodontal Evaluation - Probings	20	1.70
Root Planning	20	1.65
Ultrasonic Scaling	20	1.60
Topical Fluoride Applications	20	1.60
Dentition Charting	20	1.50
Sealants	20	1.35
Periodontal Evaluation - Complete Charting	20	1.20
Curettage	20	1.10
Indices - Bleeding	20	1.00
Indices - Periodontal	20	1.00
Subgingival Irrigation	20	.90
Selective Polishings	20	.85
Radiographs - Panorex	18	.83
Impressions for Study Models	20	.80
Indices - Gingival	19	.74
Patient Education - Group	17	.65
Indices - Plaque	19	.63
Air Polishing	19	.58
Blood Pressure/Pulse Screening	20	.55
Nutrition Counseling	19	.42
Radiographs - Occlusal	17	.41
Suture Removal	20	.40
Vitality Testing	20	.35
Perio-Pack Removal	20	.25
Orthodontic Placement and Removal	18	.22
Margination (EVA)	19	.21
Polishing Analgrams	20	.15
Rubber Dam Clamp Placement	19	.05

ADEQUACY OF PREPARATION FOR VARIOUS DENTAL HYGIENE SKILLS

Duty	N	Adequacy Index 2 = Very well prepared 1 = Adequately prepared 0 = Inadequately prepared
Ultrasonic Scaling	20	2.00
Periodontal Scaling	20	2.00
Hand Scaling	20	1.95
Polishing - All Patients	19	1.95
Selective Polishing	19	1.95
Patient Education - Individual	19	1.95
Dentition Charting	19	1.95
Radiographs - Interproximal Survey	20	1.95
Radiographs - Complete Intra-oral Survey	20	1.95
Radiographs - Perapicals	20	1.95
Periodontal Evaluations - Probings	20	1.95
Medical History of Patient	20	1.90
Sealants	19	1.89
Intra/Extra oral Exam	20	1.85
Periodontal Evaluation - Complete Charting	20	1.85
Indices - Bleeding	19	1.84
Subgingival Irrigation	19	1.79
Topical Fluoride Applications	19	1.79
Patient Education - Group	16	1.75
Indices - Plaque	16	1.73
Blood Pressure/Pulse Screening	18	1.72
Root Planning	18	1.72
Indices - Periodontal	18	1.67
Impressions for Study Models	19	1.63
Indices - Gingival	16	1.62
Air Polishing	19	1.53
Margination (EVA)	17	1.47
Polishing Analgrams	17	1.29
Nutrition Counseling	18	1.22
Curettage	19	1.21
Suture Removal	15	1.13
Perio Pack Removal	14	1.07
Radiographs - Occlusal	14	1.07
Radiographs - Panorex	16	.94
Vitality Testing	18	.56
Rubber Dam Clamp Placement	16	.37
Orthodontic Placement and Removal	15	.27

General Comments

- More education placed on pediatric care/I felt very deficient in this area.
- Requirements - although it already has changed.
- Less judgmental - more objective
- Make it a more stress free environment by: 1) remember the girls are students, 2) more help throughout the program - not just in the beginning.
- I really feel that the program was good. I think being fair and having understanding instructors helps a lot.
- Much more emphasis should be placed on accuracy in caries detection. More realistic time frame for completing prophylactic procedures.
- Have better informed instructors.
- Clinic - seems to be graded too subjectively rather than objectively. I know changes were taking place in '88 when I graduated.
- I would have liked to have learned more ortho.
- Work with students individually, also have group discussions available to help with stress of program. Make requirements more manageable.
- More objective grading. More review in diagnosing decay on X-rays. More perio education in class with a periodontist. Some orientation into private practice.

APPENDIX

- Survey Instrument with Cover Letter

William Rainey Harper College
Algonquin and Roselle Roads
Palatine, Illinois 60067
312-397-3000

February 1989

Dear Class of 1988,

Greetings from Harper's Dental Hygiene Program! By now you have been working in your new profession for nearly a year, and we are anxious for you to share with us your thoughts about our program and your dental hygiene education.

We are especially interested in how you found your employment, how you like your chosen profession, are you continuing your professional growth, and how well do you feel we prepared you.

Please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed survey and return it in the self-addressed envelope which is provided for your convenience. The survey results will help us to grow, develop, and improve our program.

Our Alumni Association meeting was a huge success. I am very encouraged about your interest and support. You will be hearing more about the Alumni Association in the weeks to come. Please keep in touch and continue to let us know how you are doing. We especially enjoy talking with our recent graduates.

Very truly yours,

Marianne P. Holt

Marianne P. Holt, R.D.H., M.A.
Coordinator
Dental Hygiene Program

jc

WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER COLLEGE

DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAM

SURVEY

1- Check (✓) your current employment situation

_____ A. Employed full time as a dental hygienist
_____ B. Employed in two part-time jobs as a dental hygienist equaling full-time employment in hours worked
_____ C. Employed as a part-time dental hygienist, by choice
_____ D. Employed as a part-time dental hygienist but would prefer full-time employment
_____ E. Employed outside the dental hygiene field by choice

Job Title_____

Why did you prefer this?_____

_____

_____ F. Employed outside the dental hygiene field but would prefer working as a dental hygienist

Present Job Title_____

_____ G. Unemployed but searching for employment
_____ H. Unemployed because am enrolled in college

Major_____ College_____

_____ I. Unemployed because of being a homemaker
_____ J. Unemployed for some other reason

2- Practice Setting:
_____ A. Solo Practitioner
_____ B. More than one practitioner
_____ C. Clinic Type
_____ D. Other_____

_____

3- Type of Practice:
_____ A. General Practice
_____ B. Perio
_____ C. Pedo
_____ D. Other_____

_____

4- _____ A. Number of work hours/week

_____ B. Number of Offices

5- What avenues did you use to find your employment situation(s)? Check (✓) all that apply.

_____ A. Personal Contact
_____ B. ADA Placement
_____ C. ADHA Placement
_____ D. Private Placement Agency
_____ E. Major City Newspaper
_____ F. Local Newspaper
_____ G. Other_____

_____

_____

(Over)

6- If you had difficulty finding employment, what type of difficulty? _____

_____

_____

_____

7- During my employment search, I was looking for:

_____ A. full-time work in one office (more than 30 hours)
_____ B. Part-time work in more than one office to equal a full-time work week.
_____ C. Part-time employment (less than 30 hours/week)
_____ D. Other - Specify_____

_____

8- How many jobs did you interview for?_____

9- How is your salary determined? Please (✓) check all that apply.

_____ A. Hourly salary
_____ B. Weekly salary
_____ C. Monthly salary
_____ D. Commission
_____ E. Salary and Commission
_____ F. Bonus and one of the aforementioned
_____ G. Independent contracting
_____ H. Other - Specify_____

_____

10- What is your average daily salary (based on an 8-hour day)?_____

11- What is your hourly salary?_____

12- What benefits are included in your work situation? Check (✓) all those that apply.

_____ A. Paid Holidays - How many?_____
_____ B. Paid Sick Days - How many?_____
_____ C. Pension Plan
_____ D. Profit Sharing
_____ E. Paid Vacation - How Much?_____
_____ F. Insurance:
1) Major Medical_____
2) Life_____
3) Disability_____
4) Liability_____
5) Malpractice_____

_____ G. Other:
1) Uniform Allowance_____
2) Continuing Education Courses Paid_____
3) Paid dues for Assocation_____
4) Reduced Fee for Dental Work_____
5) Bonus for Production Increase_____
6) Christmas Bonus_____

_____ H. Other - Please explain, especially if you are an independent contractor:

_____

_____

_____ I. No Benefits

13- Look over the following job duties and indicate which ones you perform and how well prepared you feel in each area Check (✓) one in each section.

Dental Hygienist Duty	Often Perform This Duty	Occasionally Perform This Duty	Never Perform This Duty	Feel Very Well Prepared in This Area	Feel Adequately Prepared in This Area	Feel Inadequately Prepared in This Area
A- Medical History of Patient						
B- Intra/Extra Oral Exam						
C- Blood Pressure/Pulse Screening						
D- Periodontal Evaluation						
1- Probings						
2- Complete Charting						
E- Indices						
1- Bleeding						
2- Plaque						
3- Gingival						
4- Periodontal						
5- Other (Specify) _____						
F- Ultrasonic Scaling						
G- Hand Scaling						
H- Periodontal Scaling						
I- Root Planning						
J- Curettage						
K- Polishing - All Patients						
L- Selective Polishings						
M- Air Polishing						
N- Subgingival Irrigation						
O- Patient Education						
1- Individual						
2- Group						
P- Topical Fluoride Applications						
Q- Nutrition Counseling						
R- Margination (EVA)						
S- Polishing Analgams						
T- Impressions for Study Models						
U- Vitality Testing						
V- Dentition Charting						
W- Sealants						
X- Orthodontic placement and removal						
Y- Rubber-dam clamp placement						

(continued on next page)

13- Continued
Check (✓) one in each section.

Dental Hygienist Duty	Often Perform This Duty	Occasionally Perform This Duty	Never Perform This Duty	Feel Very Well Prepared in This Area	Feel Adequately Prepared in This Area	Feel Inadequately Prepared in This Area
Z- Suture Removal						
AA- Perio Pack Removal						
BB- Radiographs						
1- Interproximal Survey						
2- Complete Intraoral Survey						
3- Panorex						
4- Perapicals						
5- Occlusal						
6- Other (Please Specify)						
_____						
_____						
_____						

14- Check (✓) the degree of satisfaction with your chosen profession.

_____ A. Very satisfied
_____ B. Satisfied
_____ C. It is OK
_____ D. Dissatisfied - Why?_____

_____

15- Are you working toward an advanced degree?

_____ A. Yes -- Major area of study_____

College_____

_____ B. No

16- Do you anticipate that you will eventually work toward an advanced degree?

_____ A. Yes -- Major area of study_____
_____ B. No --- Please explain_____

_____

17- With regard to professional development, please check (✓) all that apply.

_____ A. Maintained membership in IDHA/ADHA
_____ B. Attend local IDHA component meetings
_____ C. Participate in formalized continuing education presentations
_____ D. Volunteered for community projects or activities

18- To what degree were you satisfied with your professional education?

_____ A. Very satisfied
_____ B. Satisfied
_____ C. Somewhat satisfied
_____ D. Dissatisfied
_____ E. Very dissatisfied

Please comment on your satisfaction/dissatisfaction._____

_____

_____

19- Please comment on how we can improve the quality of our program._____

_____

_____

Please correct your mailing address, if necessary

_____

_____

_____

Please supply address of employer (optional)

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU for all your help in responding to this survey!

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges SEP 22 1989